

murders and outrages might be committed with impunity in the presence of negroes if they were not allowed to testify. He had yet to meet the first intelligent man at home who was opposed to making it the duty of the negro to testify.

Mr. Merrick said it seemed to him, with all respect to the opinions of others, that undue importance had been given to this subject by those who opposed the report of the committee. *They had endeavored to show that the effect of this section was to elevate a negro to political equality with the white man, but there was no greater misapprehension.* The qualifications of a witness had nothing whatever to do with and therefore had no analogy to, the qualifications of a juror. So with the question of suffrage. Had not the female and the child testified in the past, and had that induced any one to assert that the intelligent female was a competent juror, legislator or voter?

Mr. Peters asked if the gentleman thought that a negro was equal in intelligence to the white child?

Mr. Merrick was coming to that. When the law was passed excluding the negro from the witness box—it was in 1713, and the condition of the negro was very different then from what it is now—he was an imported savage, and was then inferior in intelligence to the white child. His moral nature was of the lowest order, and his state of antagonism to the white man made it then necessary to exclude him. But the negro was now very different from what he was. He did not hesitate to say, and without any fear of being accused of being in sympathy with that abolition feeling of which gentlemen seemed so fearful, that today the negro of Maryland was intelligent, honest and conscientious, and was a totally different being than when he was brought here in the slave ships of Rhode Island. This was no political question, but one that belonged to the principles of jurisprudence. He (Mr. M.) was born in the midst of one of the largest slaveholding counties in the State; all those whose blood flowed in his veins had been slaveholders, and he did not think he could be accused of falling in the tide of that abolition torrent of which so much had been said. He did not hesitate to say that it was nothing but false pride which restrained the